



AMY SUE VRUWINK

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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Transportation Committee update and Special Session Called

Another fall season has officially begun. As we all look forward to the upcoming hunting outings as well as Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, times are still very tough for many families in our community.

The Legislature began a special session on Thursday, September 29 regarding jobs. However, session will run simultaneously with regular fall floor period scheduled over the last two weeks of October and the first week of November. While it is important that the legislature and Governor Walker focus on job creation, as of late the majority party has been scrutinized with the many legislative proposals that are included in this special session that pander to special interest groups. Some of the bills that are proposed are known to have been written by ALEC, a group under scrutiny this year for mass-producing model legislation for states that will benefit large donors and special interests.

Furthermore, I am concerned about the manner in which we are taking up these bills. Some were introduced as draft legislation roughly two weeks ago and are being fast-tracked through the committee process. Although the need for more jobs is urgent, rushing through controversial legislation shuts the community out of the democratic process they are entitled to be apart of.

Many of the bills my colleagues in the minority caucus introduced in February are included on the special session agenda. While I am pleased that there is a show of bi-partisanship, these bills should not need to wait for a special session to be sent to the floor. They are good jobs bills that will help boost the economy and should have been passed months ago.

Also, the public is just learning that the new Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), a private/public partnership which replaced the Department of Commerce, just purchased 73 iPads and data plans for its' 63 employees costing tax payers \$60,000. At a time when job growth has been stagnant and unemployment is still prevalent, especially in Wood County, this calls into question where the state's priorities are truly at.

Also, legislative standing committees are actively taking place. I recently voted against would a bill that came before me on the Transportation Committee regarding an update in the current inattentive driving statute. Assembly Bill 206 seeks to include devices that visually display live or recorded cable television and satellite broadcasts, films, or other fluctuating video images. It also would prohibit a vehicle operator to be in the position in which they can directly observe any visual information or entertainment.

Passing this bill would force anyone using a visual electronic device to sit in the back seat. This would mean that a parent would be ticketed if their teenager is watching a movie or playing a video game device in the front seat, which is why I voted in opposition. While I fully support keeping our roads safe and our drivers attentive, I find this provision to be unacceptable in this piece of legislation. This unnecessary area of government infringement is unacceptable to me and I will continue oppose this bill. AB 206 still has to be voted on by both houses and go to the Governor to become law.

As always, if you have any questions, comments or concerns for what my office can do better to serve you, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached toll free at 1-888-534-0070 or via e-mail at Rep.Vruwink@legis.wisconsin.gov.